

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-12 ISO-00 NRC-07 ERDA-07 FEA-01
AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08
FPC-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-15 SP-02 SS-15 STR-05 TRSE-00
ACDA-10 CEQ-01 EPA-04 IO-14 NSF-02 /158 W
-----119640 302005Z /64

R 301649Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8890
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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USIAEA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EALR, ENRG, UK
SUBJECT: WINDSCALE INQUIRY AND OVERALL NUCLEAR POLICY

REF: LONDON 14446

1. SEVERAL DIFFERENT STATEMENTS MADE AT THE WINDSCALE INQUIRY (OVER BRITISH NUCLEAR FUELS LTD.'S (BNFL) PROPOSED EXPANSION OF REPROCESSING FACILITIES) IN RECENT DAYS ARE WORTHY OF NOTE FROM AN OVERALL NUCLEAR POWER GENERATION POLICY VIEWPOINT.

2. JOSEPH ROTBLAT, EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, TESTIFIED THAT WIDESPREAD AVAILABILITY OF PLUTONIUM RESULTING FROM REPROCESSING, WHICH COULD LEAD TO A PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, UNCLASSIFIED

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WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR OPPOSING THE BNFL FACILITY. PROFESSOR ROTBLAT SAID THE PROLIFERATION ISSUE OF COURSE WENT BEYOND WINDSCALE TO OTHER COUNTRIES AND URGED HMG TO ADOPT, AND ENDEAVOR TO INFLUENCE OTHER COUNTRIES TO ADOPT, THE FOLLOWING FIVE-POINT PROGRAM:

(A) BECAUSE OF MILITARY LINKS, NUCLEAR ENERGY SHOULD

BE TAKEN OUT OF COMMERICAL HANDS AND MANAGED AS
AN INTERNATIONAL ENTERPRISE.

(B) AN INTERNATIONAL BANK SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR
THE ACQUISITION, STORAGE, AND ALLOCATION OF
NUCLEAR FUELS.

(C) REPROCESSING SHOULD BE ABANDONED AND SPENT FUEL
STORED UNTIL ALTERNATIVE DISPOSAL TECHNIQUES
HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED.

(D) R AND D ON BREEDER REACTORS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT
AS A SINGLE PROJECT UNDER INTERNATIONAL AUSPICES
AND CONTROL.

(E) A MASSIVE PROGRAM OF RESEARCH ON ALTERNATIVE
SOURCES OF ENERGY SHOULD BE STARTED URGENTLY,
FINANCED AND COORDINATED BY THE UNITED NATIONS.

3. DR. EDWARD RADFORD, RADIATION BIOLOGIST AND MEMBER
OF THE U.S. ACADEMY OF SCIENCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE,
ATTACKED CURRENT NUCLEAR SAFETY STANDARDS AS HAVING
EMANATED FROM "THOSE CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH MILITARY
AND CIVILIAN NUCLEAR-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT" DURING THE
INQUIRY. HE ADDED THAT WHILE HE WAS A SUPPORTER OF
NUCLEAR ENERGY, HE WAS LESS IMPRESSED WITH THE PLU-
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TONIUM-FAST BREEDER-URANIUM CYCLE NOW THAT SOME
LOWER RISK ALTERNATIVES APPEAR TO BE AVAILABLE.

4. THE CONTROVERSIAL BRITISH PROFESSOR PETER O'DELL

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(LECTURER, ERASMUS UNIVERSITY, ROTTERDAM) TOLD THE WINDSCALE INQUIRY THERE WAS NO SELF-EVIDENT ENERGY GAP FACING BRITAIN BEFORE THE YEAR 2,000. HE COMPLAINED THE WINDSCALE FACILITY MEANWHILE WOULD HELP "BRITAIN'S COMPETITORS," SUCH AS JAPAN AND WEST GERMANY, OUT OF THE DIFFICULTY THEY ARE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE IN THEIR OWN NUCLEAR EXPANSION PLANS, GIVEN THE OPPOSITION IN THESE COUNTRIES TO REPROCESSING PLANTS.

5. MEANWHILE, AN IMPASSE HAS DEVELOPED OVER THE WINDSCALE RADIOACTIVITY THREAT. THE POLITICAL ECOLOGY GROUP OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS AND RESEARCH WORKERS, REPRESENTED BY PETER TAYLOR OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY, HAS SUBMITTED EVIDENCE SUGGESTING THAT A REPROCESSING PLANT IS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF RADIATION MORE SERIOUS THAN A REACTOR. THIS IS BASED ON A STUDY BY THE WEST UNCLASSIFIED

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GERMAN INSTITUTE OF REACTOR SAFETY. THE POLITICAL ECOLOGY GROUP WANT DATA FROM BNFL WITH WHICH TO FORECAST ACCIDENT RISKS IN AN EXISTING COMPUTER PROGRAM; BNFL REFUSES AND WANTS FIRST TO DISCUSS THE ASSUMPTIONS TO BE USED.

6. THE WINDSCALE INQUIRY IS SUPPOSED TO BE COMPLETED DURING OCTOBER, AND PRESIDING JUSTICE PARKER HAS THUS FAR RUN A TIGHT SHIP IN KEEPING THE PROCESS FACTUAL AND EVEN. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS LESS AND LESS LIKELY THAT THE INQUIRY CAN END SO PROMPTLY.

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